



December 2025

INFORMATION SHEET

Renewable Energy – Policy Intent Summary – Proposed Amendments to the Planning and Development (Significant Development) Regulations 2024

Background:

To support Western Australia's transition to renewable energy, the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) is progressing a Renewable Energy Planning Framework to provide clarity and consistency for industry and communities. The framework comprises three key components:

1. Renewable Energy Planning Code (RE Planning Code) and Guidelines

The RE Planning Code will establish consistent development assessment standards for energy infrastructure - including renewable energy facilities, battery energy storage systems and transmission systems - that can be applied statewide. A draft RE Planning Code, initially focused on wind farms, has been prepared for public consultation.

2. Amendments to the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015

Proposed amendments will:

- require proposals for new houses and other noise sensitive uses near existing or approved wind farms to be assessed to ensure they are not located where unacceptable noise impacts could occur.
- Include provisions to support the incorporation of the RE Planning Code into local planning schemes
- Introduce new land use definitions, including renewable energy facility, hydrogen production facility – small scale, battery energy storage system and transmission system.

3. Amendments to the Planning and Development (Significant Development) Regulations 2024 (the subject of this Summary Paper)

- These amendments will classify significant renewable energy facilities, battery energy storage facilities, transmission systems, hydrogen production facilities and ammonia production facilities valued at over \$20 million as 'mandatory significant development' requiring determination by the WAPC under Part 11B of the *Planning and Development Act 2005* (PD Act).

Amendments to Significant Development Regulations

At present, proponents of significant renewable energy developments have three assessment and determination pathways:

1. WAPC determination under Part 11B – Significant Development

Under the PD Act and the Planning and Development (Significant Development) Regulations 2024 (Significant Development Regulations), ‘prescribed significant development’ may be assessed and determined by the WAPC. This applies where the estimated development cost is \$20 million or more in the Swan Valley, Perth and Peel regions, and \$5 million or more elsewhere. Applications are submitted to the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage’s State Development Assessment Unit, which provides advice to the WAPC.

2. Development Assessment Panel (DAP) determination

For developments with an estimated cost of \$2 million or more, applications are submitted to and assessed by the relevant local government, which provides advice to the DAP.

3. Local government determination

For all other developments, applications are assessed by local government officers, with decisions made either under delegated authority or by Council.

The Significant Development Regulations currently provide only for ‘prescribed significant development’, which may be assessed by the WAPC at the applicant’s discretion. However, Part 11B of the PD Act enables the Regulations to include provisions for ‘mandatory significant development’ — development that, subject to eligibility criteria, must be assessed and determined by the WAPC.

The amendments to the Significant Development Regulations will introduce the first ‘mandatory assessment pathway’ for significant renewable energy projects, requiring all eligible developments to be determined by the WAPC under Part 11B. This change will provide the following benefits:

- A single development assessment and determination pathway supporting consistent assessments and decision-making;
- Coordination of State Government referrals and provision of whole of Government advice through the Department’s State Referral Coordination Unit;
- Specialist assessment by the Department’s State Development Assessment Unit, a team with the expertise required for complex renewable energy projects; and
- Continued local government and community consultation as part of the process to ensure local issues are understood and appropriately addressed.

Requiring significant renewable energy developments to be assessed and determined by the WAPC aligns with approaches adopted in other Australian States.

The following table outlines the policy intent and context, along with the proposed amendments to the Significant Development Regulations.

Please note:

- These amendments will not apply retrospectively.
- Any development applications lodged prior to commencement will continue under the assessment and determination pathway chosen by the proponent.

Policy Intent and Context	Proposed Amendment
<p>1. Development Types</p> <p>Intent: Mandate that all significant renewable energy-related developments be determined by the WAPC under Part 11B of the PD Act. This includes the following development types:</p> <p>Renewable energy facilities Facilities such as a wind or solar farm that generates electricity from a renewable energy source. That is, an energy source that is replaced rapidly by natural processes, and includes sunlight, wind, biomass, water in motion and geothermal activity.</p> <p>Battery storage facilities Facilities that store and release energy using chemical processes. They can have advantages over other energy storage facilities in that they can respond faster and therefore assist in supporting grid stability. To support the transition to renewable energy, the definition will capture battery storage facilities which are developed as standalone facilities or in association with renewable energy and other power generating facilities.</p> <p>Electricity transmission infrastructure (Transmission Systems) The network of high-voltage cables, towers, transformers and substations that transport electricity from generation to distribution points. To support the transition to renewable energy, the definition will capture electricity transmission infrastructure which is used to distribute electricity generated from both renewable and non-renewable energy sources.</p> <p>Hydrogen and ammonia production facilities Facilities used to produce and store hydrogen or ammonia. Both hydrogen and ammonia can be used to store energy (including energy captured by renewable energy facilities). The definitions will capture all types of hydrogen and ammonia production regardless of the energy source and technology used. This inclusive approach recognises that while some production methods are greener than others, all forms can contribute in some way to the renewable energy transition.</p>	<p>Amend the Significant Development Regulations to specify the following as mandatory significant development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewable energy facility • Battery storage facility • Transmission system • Hydrogen production facility • Ammonia production facility <p>Provide supporting definitions for each.</p>

Policy Intent and Context	Proposed Amendment
<p>2. Development Value</p> <p>Intent:</p> <p>Require that renewable energy-related developments classified as ‘mandatory significant development’ be determined by the WAPC under Part 11B of the PD Act.</p> <p>For this purpose, ‘mandatory significant development’ will be defined by its estimated development cost – specifically projects valued at \$20 million or more. This threshold would apply to an individual renewable energy development type (such as those described above) or a combination of these types within a single proposal.</p> <p>Note: Current thresholds for ‘prescribed significant development’ are \$20 million or more in the Swan Valley and Perth or Peel regions, and \$5 million elsewhere.</p>	<p>Amend the Significant Development Regulations to classify the renewable energy development types specified in point 1 above, as ‘mandatory significant development’ under Part 11B where the estimated development cost is \$20 million or more (individual or combined development types in a single proposal).</p>

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